

# PUBLIC HEALTH

## For Everybody, Everywhere

### All Day Long



#### **Public Health Journal**

##### **7:00 a.m.**

The clock radio comes on, heralding another day. Already? The weather report promises a clear day with good air quality. It's nice to know that public health monitors air pollution levels for us and develops programs to reduce pollution and offer useful health advice.

##### **7:15 a.m.**

After showering, you brush your teeth. Safe drinking water is the responsibility of public health. A quick check of your smile in the mirror reminds you that you have no cavities, thanks to fluoride in the water, another public health service that prevents tooth decay.

##### **7:50 a.m.**

You're running late, no time to eat breakfast, maybe you'll grab a bite at the office. You get in your car and fasten your seat belt automatically because for years public health advocates have educated you and your family about the importance of wearing a seat belt. As you pull around a bicyclist sharing the road with you, you appreciate public health for supporting the use of helmets by all bicyclists, another initiative that saves lives.

##### **8:23 a.m.**

You drop off your 2-year-old daughter at day care for the day and think to yourself how fortunate you are that public health inspects the food and safety of the facility. You make a mental note to bring in

the updated public health immunization record for her files and a copy of her birth certificate from the public health vital statistics office. Before leaving, you slather sunscreen on your daughter's face and arms as the children play outside much of the day. You want to do what you can to protect her skin and her health.

##### **8:33 a.m.**

You pull into the parking lot, lock the door and head for the office, stopping for a doughnut and cup of coffee to go on the way. You've heard the public health messages about reducing fat and increasing fruits and vegetables in your diet and getting more physical activity. You resolve to get up earlier tomorrow and take the time to have a healthier breakfast.

##### **9:00 a.m.**

Once settled at your desk you read about the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on your favorite online news site. You learn that the CDC, which is the primary federal public health agency, works with states and county health departments to prevent major causes of death and disability from tobacco, viruses and bacteria, sexually-transmitted diseases and unintentional injuries.

##### **9:30 a.m.**

The phone rings. It is your father. He indicates that he is attending a workshop at the local health department later this afternoon on how to control his diabetes. He has had a difficult time with his health in recent years and qualifies for Medic-

aid to help with his medical bills. “Thank heaven for public health,” he says. You recall shortly after you found out you were pregnant with your daughter how much you appreciated and needed the public health’s Women Infants Children (WIC) program to keep you healthy and eating food with high nutritional value.

#### **10:40 a.m.**

Now it’s time for a quick work break and a breath of fresh air. As you step outside your office you inhale a breath of fresh air and note that your building and 25 feet near public entrances are smoke free to prevent the dangers of secondhand smoke.

#### **Noon**

Lunchtime. You go to a nearby restaurant with some coworkers, appreciating public health’s inspection program that works to assure the safety of the food. As you wash your hands before ordering, you remember to stop and take advantage of the free cholesterol screenings public health is offering back at work in the break room.

#### **1:00 p.m.**

While driving back to work you hear a news report about an outbreak of illness that is puzzling hospitals. The report indicates that public health epidemiologists and communicable disease experts are investigating the illness to prevent it from spreading. As you near the corner by your work, you see a car crash ahead. There are certified Emergency Medical Technicians on the scene providing life-saving care to the injured.

#### **6:15 p.m.**

Time to head for the gym. Before stopping to pick up your daughter you exercise to maintain your weight and reduce stress—which you get plenty of in your job! You have learned through public health that a half hour of physical activity a day can help prevent heart disease and many types of cancer.

#### **6:30 p.m.**

As you put your daughter in her car seat a health educator from the public health

department is onsite helping parents make sure that the seat is installed and being used correctly. A few adjustments are made and you are on your way.

#### **8:20 p.m.**

When you arrive home there’s a message on the answering machine from your mother reminding you to send a get-well card to your great uncle who is recovering from surgery in a nursing home. You know your uncle is in good hands because the nursing home has been licensed and certified by public health to ensure that it meets established standards of care.

#### **9:00 p.m.**

Now you are ready for bed, setting your alarm for the morning. Public health has touched your life in more than 20 ways in one day—ways that maintain and improve you and your family’s health and quality of life. How many more ways will you be touched by public health tomorrow? **UTH**